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President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 10 *(continued)*

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/1)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.5)

Mr. Arcilla (Philippines): I wish at the outset to express our appreciation to and to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his comprehensive report (A/50/1) and for the various initiatives he has undertaken and pursued to further enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations and its Secretariat.

The United Nations, for 50 years, has in general done its best to act effectively and in a timely manner in respect of the various demands of our times. It has responded with creativity and innovativeness, notwithstanding severe constraints, including its diminishing financial resources. Considerable attention has been paid to preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution. Several major initiatives, including those relating to the search for peace in Angola and to the restoration of democracy in Haiti, have been adequately supported by the Organization.

The United Nations has also ensured the implementation of various post-conflict peace-building measures. Notable here is the assistance provided for the conduct of elections and for mine-clearing activities in various countries. Likewise, the Organization has successfully undertaken a number of peace-keeping operations, despite the fact that the need for such support mechanisms has grown in number and complexity in recent years.

In the fields of development and humanitarian action, the Organizations — either through its own Department of Development Support and Management Services or through the various United Nations organs, agencies and other bodies, such as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, and the regional commissions — has carried out and implemented various technical cooperation activities, despite financial constraints. The Organization's portfolio of technical cooperation projects and the demands for timely and efficient project delivery have grown considerably through the years.

The Organization has also undertaken various operational follow-up activities in the implementation of decisions and agreements emanating from several international conferences, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development.

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There is much more that the developing countries would like the Organization to undertake, in keeping with various international agreements and instruments designed to support their efforts to achieve sustained growth and development and to address, in particular, the eradication of poverty and the urgent needs of the most vulnerable segments of their societies.

The globalization of the world economy and the deepening interdependence among nations have also presented new challenges and opportunities, as well as risks and uncertainties, for the future of the world economy, in particular, for the development prospects of developing countries. The Organization must respond to these new challenges and opportunities by providing the necessary support to enhance its role in formulating appropriate policy guidelines on international economic and development issues, as well as ensuring that the requisite operational follow-up measures are carried out.

Obviously, my intervention today cannot fully do justice to the wide-ranging topics covered in the report. We can only highlight some of its major elements and, possibly, focus on the bottleneck that prevents the Organization from providing optimum service to Member States.

The Secretary-General has on several occasions brought to our attention the financial situation of the Organization. The report unequivocally reiterates the point that the United Nations now faces very serious financial situation. It details the indices of the severity of the current financial problems, including the millions of dollars owed to Governments that have contributed troops and equipment to peace-keeping operations. The report asserts that "This is manifestly unjust". (*A/50/1, para. 32*)

It is disturbing to note that, despite our collective recognition of the problem — as stated in General Assembly resolution 41/213 — and of the requirement to fulfil our financial obligations promptly and in full, we have failed to act decisively on the Organization's perennial problem of cash availability. My delegation therefore once again appeals to the Member States concerned, particularly the largest contributor, to make every effort to pay all their dues unconditionally, in full and on time.

We welcome the initiatives being pursued by the Secretary-General to streamline the Organization into a more focused and integrated machinery. We support the Secretary-General's efforts to increase its efficiency. "Downsizing" has been implemented and will continue in the years to come, as is already reflected in the biennium budget for 1996-1997, and in various organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations.

However, we wish to reiterate the point that an institution can pursue genuine reforms only under a policy framework that seeks to fully realize its mandate. When we speak of reforms, we should be very clear on the premises underlying what we would like to achieve. We must refer in unmistakable terms to the efforts to achieve economy and efficiency in fulfilling completely the mandates of the bodies, organs and agencies of the United Nations system, not to efforts that will compromise effective programme delivery and be substitutes for measures aimed at significantly strengthening the United Nations role in development.

It is on this note that our Organization has to pause and assess the impact on its mandates of streamlining exercises. We clearly need to see where we stand and to proceed cautiously on other, related measures.

Before concluding, may, I, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, convey the views of the Group on the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.5. We take note that this draft resolution will be considered under agenda item 119, entitled "Pattern of conferences", which has been allocated by the General Assembly to the Fifth Committee for its consideration. After careful and in-depth consideration of the report of the Committee on Conferences, the Group of 77 and China are of the view that the control and limitation of documentation are integral parts of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly under that agenda item. Hence, the Group of 77 and China will carefully review the elements of draft resolution A/50/L.5 in the Fifth Committee within the broadest context of the agenda item entitled "Pattern of conferences".

Mr. Tejera-París (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The report (A/50/1) of the Secretary-General is the best possible summary of the successes, realities and frustrations of our Organization. My Government is firmly convinced of the enduring usefulness of the United Nations, strengthened by the indisputably favourable balance of the cumulative record of its entire system. The performance of the Secretary-

General and the Secretariat as a whole deserves our deepest gratitude and support.

The subjects covered by the Secretary-General is so extensive and varied that it will certainly receive the special and detailed attention of councils, committees, working groups and experts. We hope this will result in original and practical conclusions rather than repetition and lengthy documents and speeches.

With regard to reforms, we must focus more on improving systems and methods and the dynamic of their functioning than on purely structural reform or, what is worse, the generation of flow charts for cosmetic purposes. In my experience, the repetition of speeches and resolutions, far from enhancing implementation, dilutes and dulls the will to act. One of the important objectives of the reform contemplated in our Organization is to narrow as much as possible the gap between resolution and implementation. In this regard, nothing could be more helpful than clearing a path by avoiding repetitive resolutions, documents and speeches and adding substance to existing studies and simplifying to the extent possible the work of the new Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. My delegation has already expressed its views on the timeliness and functioning of that Working Group and hopes express itself again when the report of the Secretary-General is submitted for our consideration, as suggested by our delegation last July.

Superfluous though it might seem to insist on administrative considerations as opposed to political aims, the most dangerous thing for an institution is to risk its prestige and moral strength by appearing to be more prone to words than deeds. While supporting the Secretariat's efforts to improve the way it functions and reduce its expenses, I must say that at the root of the reform of the United Nations lies a reform of ourselves — of Governments and their delegations — through economizing on talk and strengthening the finances of the Organization.

My delegation has already mentioned the reform of the Security Council. Since 1945 our positions have been on record. As regards the Trusteeship Council, we believe it can be left as is, in accordance with the Charter, without cost.

However, we would like to place very special emphasis today on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council. Other delegations have made comments in this connection with which we concur, and my Government is ready to cooperate actively in reorienting the United Nations and its entire system towards its primary preventive objective: improvement of the human condition. We must root out the social and economic causes of inequality, oppression and armed conflict. We must disarm the world, control the manufacture of weapons and gradually and inexorably downsize the business of the merchants of death.

We must comply with the tenets of the United Nations Charter and respect the sovereignty and opinions of States. It is all well and good to make military and economic efforts to prevent or halt conflicts, but it is first necessary to make sure that the parties have the will to accept mediation.

My Government has also insisted that we must follow up any suspicion of corruption in business or government, step up the fight against the scourge of drug trafficking and gird national economies against the violent ebb and flow of paper investment and unbridled, unmonitored speculation.

The United Nations must continue to do its best to promote and strengthen democracy in all of its political, social and economic aspects and promote ever more social justice. With clear operational objectives and a more effective and prestigious staff, our Organization will make swift progress in the coming years and peoples will no doubt contribute avidly to the finances and endeavours of the United Nations.

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Surie (India): It is once again with great regret that my delegation has to speak to exercise our right of reply to respond to the statement made by the representative of Pakistan yesterday. That statement appears to be part of a well-orchestrated and motivated litany of falsehoods, half-truths and selective interpretations of events and facts.

True to style and consistent with past practice, the representative of Pakistan has chosen to misrepresent and selectively quote what the Secretary-General stated in his report on the work of the Organization for 1995. The Government of India has taken note of the section of the report of the Secretary-General on India and Pakistan, in which he has referred to the commitment of India and Pakistan to resolve the issue peacefully in accordance with the Simla Agreement of 1972. The Government of India remains fully committed to this course, and will continue its efforts to revive bilateral talks, for which several proposals have been made to the Government of Pakistan. The commitment of the Government of Pakistan to the Simla Agreement, on the other hand, appears to be clearly open to question.

The Secretary-General has also referred to incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir. I must emphasize that these incidents are entirely due to Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism, militancy and extremism across the Line of Control. I doubt if the Assembly needs any further proof of this. This is publicly documented and well established.

In spite of numerous provocations by Pakistan, Indian security forces have exercised enormous restraint. There is no threat to peace and security in the region from the Indian side of the Line of Control, nor the international border.

The Government of India hopes that the Government of Pakistan will demonstrate sincerity to find a peaceful solution by eschewing sponsorship of terrorism across the Line of Control and returning to the negotiating table for a meaningful dialogue, as urged by the Secretary-General in his report on the work of the United Nations.

It is ironic that Pakistan repeatedly refers to the implementation of Security Council resolutions. It is a historical fact that it was Pakistan which first violated the said resolutions so as to prevent their implementation at that time by refusing to vacate the aggression that it had committed in Jammu and Kashmir. As my delegation has stated on several occasions before, the Security Council resolutions cannot be implemented at Pakistan's convenience and on its terms.

India remains committed to bilateral dialogue under the Simla Agreement. In his report on the work of the Organization for 1995, the Secretary-General has indicated that both India and Pakistan have affirmed their commitment to respect the cease-fire line and to resolve the issues peacefully in accordance with the Simla Agreement of 1972. Let Pakistan demonstrate its sincerity to agreements that it has signed and to the cause of peace and good neighbourliness, by stopping its support for terrorism in India and returning to the path of peaceful, bilateral dialogue to which it is committed under the Simla Agreement.

Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. This is and remains an immutable fact. The only impediment to peace in Jammu and Kashmir is terrorism — directed, funded and sustained from across the border. The only solution to the problem is the vacation of aggression by Pakistan and the return of that portion of Jammu and Kashmir under foreign occupation since 1947 to India.

This response will no doubt bring forth yet another outpouring of unfounded allegations and distortions from the representative of Pakistan. I have no intention of wasting the valuable time of this Assembly any further by insisting on exercising my second right of reply.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): I am astonished at the angry diatribe of the Indian representative directed against Pakistan. In our intervention yesterday we referred to the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization. In our statement we presented the following facts.

In his report the Secretary-General mentioned incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir and the further aggravation of relations between India and Pakistan. Can India deny this?

The Secretary-General highlighted the urgency of seeking a political solution through a meaningful dialogue. Are the Indians denying this?

The Secretary-General reiterated his offer of assistance to facilitate a search for a lasting solution. Are the Indians denying this?

In our statement we said that Pakistan had accepted the Secretary-General's offer of good offices and that the Indian Government had not accepted it. Are the Indians denying these facts?

In order to ascertain the veracity of India's baseless allegations of interference by Pakistan in

Kashmir, Pakistan has made offers on a number of occasions for the establishment of a neutral mechanism along the Line of Control. Last year we proposed that the number of observers in the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan be increased to verify the alleged reports of cross-border movement. India rejected these sincere offers. Are the Indians denying this fact?

In our statement we said that 600,000 Indian troops had been deployed in Kashmir to mount a campaign of State terrorism against innocent Kashmiri civilians. Are the Indians denying the deployment of these forces?

In our statement we cited facts regarding massacres, killings, arbitrary detention, extrajudicial executions, arson and the use of rape as an instrument of war. These facts have been documented and substantiated by impartial human rights organizations. Are the Indians denying this and implying that all these reports about massive violations of human rights in Jammu and Kashmir are a mere hallucination?

Can they be denying that their occupation forces have brutally killed over 50,000 besieged Kashmiris in the last five years?

In his report the Secretary-General referred to preventive diplomacy, early-warning mechanisms, quiet diplomacy, conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. It is in this context that Pakistan has urged the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts for a peaceful solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Are the Indians denying the validity of these mechanisms in inter-State conduct, as suggested by the Secretary-General himself?

The Secretary-General in the 1994 report had mentioned that relations between India and Pakistan were marred by the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, one of the oldest unresolved disputes still on the United Nations agenda. Are the Indians denying this painful fact, that the non-resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute over the last 48 years has bedevilled relations between India and Pakistan?

Are the Indians denying that Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory, recognized as such by the United Nations? If that were so, one wonders why the Indian External Affairs Minister would issue a statement on the eve of his visit to the General Assembly last month on the necessity for a resumption of the stalled dialogue between India and Pakistan.

Is India denying that the Security Council in its resolutions has clearly mandated that the future of Jammu and Kashmir will be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir through a free and impartial plebiscite? Is India rejecting this mechanism in contravention of United Nations resolutions?

What Pakistan is saying is that the peace and security situation between India and Pakistan is deteriorating fast because of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and that the unabated aggression mounted by Indian occupation forces against the defenceless people of Kashmir is the reason for that. Is India denying the need for ending repression in Kashmir and starting a substantive dialogue to resolve the Jammu and Kashmir issue?

The factual evidence against India is definitive and damning. We are tired of the Indian litany and mantra that Kashmir is an integral part of India. Kashmir has never been an integral part of India. The accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India was fraudulent. All of the measures taken by India to annex Jammu and Kashmir, including the election of a so-called Constituent Assembly, have all been rejected by the Security Council.

Recently, India has introduced yet another ludicrous refrain in its argument. It says that Kashmir is an inalienable part of India. The use of this word is ironic, because the Indian leaders know that the alienation of the people of Kashmir from India is complete. So much for the Indian choice of the word "inalienable".

We are also tired of India's mantra of allegations of terrorism against Pakistan. How brazenly does India try to hide the ugly fact that India today is the largest terrorist State in the world! India has unleashed terrorism not only in Jammu and Kashmir, but in all its neighbouring States. In the recent past, Indian terrorists have killed hundreds of people in Pakistan. India has abetted, sponsored and exported terrorism to the neighbouring States. It has illegally occupied Kashmir, annexed Sikkim and devoured Hyderabad and Junagadh. This is terrorism — state terrorism at its worst.

India talks of a bilateral dialogue with Pakistan. When it comes to the negotiating table, it refuses to discuss Jammu and Kashmir on the pretext that it is a part of India. It knows that, in the past 23 years, it has never talked to Pakistan on the substantive aspects of the Kashmir issue. It is because of this Indian obduracy that the intercession of the United Nations Secretary-General and the activation of United Nations mechanisms for the pacific settlement of disputes in the context of Jammu and Kashmir has become absolutely necessary. If the situation were left to Indian machinations, the whole region would be engulfed in flames and the systematic genocide of the Kashmiris would reach its tragic conclusion in a final solution.

The Indian Government tries to give the impression that there is peace and tranquillity in the region and that the only aberration is interference from Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir. Cease-fire violations across the Line of Control by the Indian soldiers have been reported by the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan. The Neelam Valley in Azad Kashmir is completely cut off because of India's constant firing, resulting in a humanitarian crisis for 100,000 Kashmiris.

And yet India is trying to make this house believe that the situation in Kashmir is normal. The Secretary-General, during his visit to India and Pakistan last year, expressed his apprehension that the escalation of the situation in Kashmir could result in an accident. The Secretary-General's fear is still valid a year later — in fact, even more acutely than a year ago.

We appeal to India to halt its repression in Kashmir, recognize the legitimate right of the people of Kashmir to self-determination, and agree on a lasting solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the mechanisms prescribed by the United Nations and the Security Council.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to inform Members that the sponsor of draft resolution A/50/L.5, having considered that the subject matter of the draft resolution is under the purview of the Fifth Committee, has decided to submit the draft resolution to the Fifth Committee under agenda item 119, entitled "Pattern of conferences".

Agenda item 120 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

The President: I should like to inform members of the General Assembly that the Secretary-General has received a letter informing him that Mali has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to make a brief remark on the forthcoming special Assembly plenary meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary. In order to ensure the smooth and timely conduct of the proceedings, I have addressed a letter dated 16 October 1995 to all delegations seeking their assistance in keeping the time limit for speeches.

As Members know, the General Assembly has decided that each speaker will have five minutes to make a statement during the Special Commemorative Meeting to be held on 22, 23 and 24 October. I am aware that this time limit may be difficult to observe. I must stress, however, that the ceremony will be seriously disrupted if that limit is not strictly respected. For instance, if each speaker spoke for seven minutes instead of five, we would have an extra six and a half hours of speeches.

I therefore urge every delegation to convey, on my behalf, to its head of delegation that the fixed limit of five minutes should be rigorously observed. Otherwise, I may be forced, against my will, to interrupt the speaker and to ask that the speech be concluded. Members can well imagine that I would rather not have to take such an action, out of respect for all the Heads of State and Heads of Government

and other dignitaries who will honour the United Nations with their presence.

I would be grateful for Members' earnest cooperation in this regard.

Agenda item 3 (*continued*)

Credentials of representatives to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly

(b) First report of the Credentials Committee (A/50/559)

The President: The draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 10 of its first report (A/50/559) reads as follows:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Having considered* the first report of the Credentials Committee and the recommendation contained therein,

"*Approves* the first report of the Credentials Committee."

We shall now proceed to consider the draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 10 of its first report.

I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for an explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Abolhassani Shahreza (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation would like to express its reservations regarding paragraph 4 of the first report of the Credentials Committee, contained in document A/50/559, on the credentials of Israel.

For this reason, and in line with the position of my Government on the issue, my delegation wishes to dissociate itself from the part of the said report referring to the approval of the credentials of Israel.

The President: We shall now take action on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee set forth in paragraph 10 of its first report (A/50/559). The Credentials Committee adopted this draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/4).

The President: I call on the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, who wishes to explain the position of his delegation on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The fact that the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya did not object to the report of the Credentials Committee in document A/50/559 in no way implies recognition of the credentials of the Israeli's delegation.

Despite the recent developments regarding the Palestinian question, what is taking place now cannot be construed as forming the basis for a permanent or just solution. The solution could be achieved only on the basis of full recognition of all the rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which are the rights to return to its land, to self-determination and to the establishment of a democratic State in Palestine with Al-Quds as its capital, where Arabs and Jews alike can live.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 3.

Agenda item 36

Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War: draft resolution (A/50/L.3 and Corr.1)

The President: Members will recall that by paragraph 3 of resolution 49/25 of 2 December 1994, the General Assembly decided to hold a solemn meeting of the Assembly on 18 October 1995, that is, today, in commemoration of the victims of the war.

In this connection, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/50/L.3 and Corr.1.

I call on the representative of the Russian Federation to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian):* This solemn meeting today is dedicated to what is undoubtedly the most memorable and meaningful date of this century, which had a significant impact on all subsequent developments in the international community and world politics.

The end of the Second World War 50 years ago is engraved forever in the memory of mankind as the most tragic event and, at the same time, the brightest. We are mourning today the millions of lost human lives and inexpressible human suffering, whose echoes can be heard even now. But at the same time, we are proud of mankind which has managed, after uniting its efforts, to win in truth the greatest historic victory over the forces of destruction, subjugation and suppression of human dignity.

The main lesson of this landmark experience is obvious — the way to the survival and prosperity of the world is through the cohesion and collective efforts of all constructive forces and through the decisive resolution of minor differences for the sake of common paramount interests and goals.

In celebrating this anniversary, we can rightfully say that the difficult path followed by the international community over the last half century has made it possible to draw a line under the outcome of the Second World War, to turn this sorrowful page of history and to direct our expectations to the future. As we all know, the roots of the future lie in the past and in the present.

Today's world dialectically combines within itself both dangers and threats fraught with instability and the risk of new global shocks, while nourishing the growth of an essentially new and different non-confrontational system of international relations. Through ever more active multilateral efforts in confronting common challenges, we see more clearly the basic principles of such a system. It is based on the balance of interests, equitable cooperation and the partnership of different States and international institutions, the inadmissibility of the emergence of new dividing lines and the establishment of cooperative approaches to the problems of security and development.

Moreover, we have a unique instrument for advancing towards a new world order — the United Nations, an organization born from the ashes of the World War to save future generations from the scourge of new wars and conflicts.

Basing itself on the experience and lessons of the Second World War and on the traditions and ideals of the anti-Hitler coalition, and combining political will and the efforts of States and nations, the international community today has quite enough strength to carry out this cornerstone task enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Reaffirming its intention to continue to make an active practical contribution to the attainment of this goal, the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) have submitted a draft resolution (A/50/L.3 and Corr.1), entitled "Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War", and the annex, "Declaration in Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War".

Paying tribute to the memory of the victims of the Second World War, and remembering with gratitude all those who have struggled against dictatorship, oppression, racism and aggression, the Declaration emphasizes, in particular, the vital need to undertake all possible efforts to put an end to existing armed conflicts, to avert such conflicts in the future and to overcome the manifestations of political, economic and social inequality.

The States of the world are called upon to:

> "reaffirm the commitment to refrain from the use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations; to redouble their efforts to put an end to all conflicts and to save future generations from the scourge of new wars and racial hatred, *inter alia*, by drawing the lessons that emerge from the history of past conflicts; to promote democracy and human rights and to support universal access to culture; to focus their efforts on the objective of creating conditions for the general progress of humankind in larger freedom." *(A/50/L.3, para. 5).*

We are pleased to note that an impressive group of United Nations Members have become sponsors of this draft.

The sponsors, who now include Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Mongolia, Nigeria, Norway, Peru,

the Republic of Korea and Uruguay, expect that the draft resolution and the annexed Declaration will be adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The year 1995 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the most devastating war ever witnessed by mankind. The European Union, together with Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania and the Slovak Republic, in whose name I have the honour to speak, consider it highly appropriate that we, the Member States of the United Nations, today pay a special tribute to the extreme sacrifices wrought by the War.

The peoples of Europe remember only too well the horrors of the Second World War and the great suffering that it inflicted upon so many: not only the soldiers, sailors and airmen from all continents who lost their lives in battle, but also the innocent civilians who perished in their homes, and, in particular, those millions of men, women and children who died in the death camps. The memory of the atrocities of the Holocaust committed against the Jewish communities all around Europe will be an everlasting warning against all kinds of totalitarian and racist ideologies.

Today we commemorate all victims of the War in a way that should go beyond remembering those who lost their lives, their health or their possessions throughout the years of conflict. We should go beyond mourning the millions of innocents who suffered. Today we should preserve the unfading memory of all victims for future generations by honouring the men and women who fought for the restoration of human dignity. They serve as an inspiration to all those who today dedicate their lives to the preservation of peace and freedom. Our thoughts must also turn to the victims of present conflicts.

Those tremendous sacrifices were not in vain. Justice and democracy finally triumphed over dictatorship and aggression.

The end of the Second World War established the necessary conditions for the creation of the United Nations. The countries recovering from the devastation of the war renewed the hope of humanity in the future by designing a new structure dedicated to fostering coexistence and international cooperation. The San Francisco Charter is a living monument to the lessons learned from the war.

The same is true of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which formed the basis for all subsequent international human rights instruments. The European Union remains convinced that, in the words of the preamble to the Universal Declaration,

> "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world".

As the President of the first session of the General Assembly, the eminent European Paul-Henri Spaak, stated in his opening address on 11 January 1946,

> "For years these tens of millions suffered, endured, accepted hardships and sacrificed, and now they ask for their reward. The reward for which they ask is peace, a just and enduring peace, and that we must bring them". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, First Session, Plenary Meetings, 2nd meeting, p. 49)*

The scourge of war has not been fully eradicated. But the United Nations and the principles of its Charter are essential tools for the maintenance of peace and the struggle for fundamental human rights.

The European Union was forged out of the experience of that war and a desire never to repeat the suffering it caused. The European Union is composed of countries that fought on opposing sides in the Second World War and of others that took no part in the conflict. Most of the Union's member States were directly affected by the war and by the division of Europe that resulted. The very existence of the European Union, its vigour and cohesiveness and its openness to new members are proof of our determination to make such a war impossible in Europe again.

As the European Union solemnly declared in Messina on 2 June last,

> "The Europe of freedom which was constructed after the Second World War has guaranteed its peoples an unmatched period of peace, stability and prosperity".

The solemn Declaration adopted by the European Council at Cannes on the occasion of the United Nations fiftieth anniversary emphasizes the extent to

which the United Nations, which was created in response to the tragedy of the Second World War, helped in the reconstruction of Europe and in aiding the refugees of the conflict.

Today, just as the European Council did last June, we solemnly reaffirm our attachment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and renew our commitment to serving the ideals and action of the United Nations.

The European Union therefore wholeheartedly supports the draft declaration just introduced by the Russian Federation in the General Assembly today. The 15 European Union countries actively participated in the preparation of this text. All States members of the European Union are among the sponsors of the draft resolution, contained in document A/50/L.3. The European Union hopes that the draft resolution accompanying the Declaration in Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Muller (Marshall Islands): It is a great honour for me to be here today to speak on behalf of the Marshall Islands. It is the view of my delegation that this solemn occasion should be one on which we pay particular respect to the memory of the many millions who died in that fateful war.

I am also here today to try to bring to the attention of delegations here that the war in the Pacific involved more than the great Powers of the day. I want to honour the memory of those Pacific islanders who fell in the struggle for freedom and justice and in the fight against oppression. In that sense, we feel a strong sense of solidarity with peoples on other shores, in lands far away from us, who also went through untold suffering.

Of the two World Wars, it was the second that brought devastating pain and suffering to the shores of the Marshall Islands. It was the most horrific of times, when we saw the blood of our loved ones paint our ocean and lagoon waters crimson red. Most of the victims were either shot or beheaded by faraway warring States, which suspected our people of aiding the opposition. Our people simply got caught in the crossfire. In particular, my people faced the most severe hardships towards the end of the war, when supplies were dwindling.

Still haunted by the horrors of a war they did not cause, many of our elders remained silent until fairly recently. They were unable to utter any recollection of that ugly war, essentially leaving our younger generation to wonder all these years: What were the losses? How did the country suffer? What was it that kept our people together? While we may not be able to fully comprehend the pain our elders experienced during the Second World War, to some degree we can ascertain its impact through the few who have been able to recount some of their experiences for us.

It was as an impoverished and suffering people that we greeted our liberation. The events that followed, which caused us to be placed under Trusteeship, are not memories that we treasure. We are still learning to deal with the results of the nuclear testing programme that this Organization allowed to proceed in our islands. Now we have come to a point in history which so closely mirrors what happened in the Marshall Islands. It seems that the international community will yet again stand by while a colonial Power flexes its nuclear muscle and tests weapons in the South Pacific. We cannot let this go on any more.

As we remember our fallen countrymen, their legacy must be the impetus in our task of ensuring that the scourge of war is eradicated once and for all and replaced by preventive diplomacy. This is the only way forward if we are fully to implement the provisions of the Charter. The "Agenda for Peace" outlines areas we can commence working on today to ensure a safer world tomorrow for our children. To this end, it would be necessary to reflect on and repeat those successes the Organization has had in peace-keeping efforts. We must also constructively review and criticize the failures that have occurred.

The international community, having experienced the pain and suffering brought upon it by two world wars, opted to establish the United Nations for the purpose of ensuring international peace and security, a task which is unparalleled in both scope and complexity. This purpose should remain our guiding principle today and tomorrow in our quest for global peace in a world where we all work constructively together, in a world free from want, from fear and from the scourge of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): The year 1995 can rightfully be called a golden one in the calendar of international life. It is the year that marks the fiftieth

anniversary of the events which played a crucial role in forming the structure of international relations and which paved the way for further evolution of humankind.

The starting point was the end of the Second World War. In remote 1945, the heroic struggle of freedom-loving nations of the world resulted in the victory over fascism and militarism, over the ideology of the supremacy of one nation over the other. We are proud of the fact that a significant contribution to that victory was made, along with the peoples of the coalition States, by peoples of the former USSR, including the people of Ukraine, whose victories upon the battlefields of the Great Patriotic War determined, in fact, the victorious outcome of the Second World War.

Regrettably, this great historic victory was attained at a high price: the heavy of loss of human lives, incredible suffering, unprecedented material losses. It is testified to, perhaps, by the fact that there is no family in Ukraine that was unaffected by the tragedy of the war and the terror of its devastating consequences.

It was the victory in the Second World War, as well as the suffering of the victims, that raised the need for the internationalization of international relations in order to prevent a new global conflict. To this end the United Nations was established as a means for better organization of the world order and as a source of human hope for the maintenance of peace and security all over the world.

We should not forget either that the end of the Second World War gave powerful impetus to national liberation movements in the countries of Asia and Africa, and considerably consolidated the bases for building a new world order, driven by the achievement of State independence by many countries of the world. At the same time, there is the other side of the outcome of the Second World War. We have to speak about what we might call the tragedy of this historical event. There was a bipolar split of the world; for a long time, the cold war's web paralysed the move to democracy by some countries.

Today we mark the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War in qualitatively new historical conditions, when the aftermath of the cold war has practically been overcome. States are no longer separated by ideological barriers. One of the largest world empires has collapsed. Newly independent States emerged, including Ukraine, and our hopes for attaining an epoch of peace, prosperity, development and democracy have become more realistic.

In reviewing the 50 years that have passed since the end of the Second World War, it is necessary to mention the lessons of that great victory as well; they are topical today. Proceeding from the philosophical conception of mankind's development as a spiral, they should become an axiom for the future. One of the main lessons proves that only through joint effort is it possible to put an end to armed conflict that is tearing regions apart, and to prevent new conflicts. There is no alternative to the settlement of emerging disputes and disagreements by peaceful means. We also believe that it is in our common interest not to allow the threat or use of force against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of any State. The struggle against a number of negative manifestations of chauvinism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and nationalism should also be in our field of vision. It is necessary to put an end once and for all to their unhealthy forms, which propagate a scornful attitude to other peoples and cultures.

Today as never before, we have a unique chance to implement the dream of the victors of half a century ago, and to build a system of international relations and collective security, that would put an end to the attempts of any aggressor to carve the map of the world at his own discretion. We, the peoples of the United Nations, have no right to miss such an opportunity.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Fifty years ago, people throughout the world who loved and yearned for peace celebrated in many languages their great victory in the anti-fascist war. Today when we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of that victory, we should not forget particularly the martyrs who gave their valuable lives for peace and the innocent victims of the war.

The world-wide anti-fascist war, half a century ago, was a war to determine the destiny of mankind, as well as the decisive battle in human history between justice and evil, brightness and darkness, and progressive and reactionary forces. In the face of the war of aggression launched by the fascists, all peace-loving peoples in the world, irrespective of the size of their country and differences in their race, colour, religious faith or social system, forged an international anti-fascist united front in an unprecedented spirit of

unity and, supporting one another with a common hatred of the enemy, waged a surging anti-fascist struggle to safeguard peace and defend justice.

On the western front, from the battle of Stalingrad to that of Al-Alamein, and from the landing at Normandy to the capture of Berlin, the Soviet Union, the United States, the United Kingdom and France waged a life-and-death struggle against the German fascists on every battlefield. The people of the former Soviet Union, in particular, who lost 27 million lives, made huge contributions to and sacrifices for victory in the war.

In the East, the peoples of China and of other Asian countries fought the Japanese aggressors in the same heroic spirit of sacrifice. China was the largest victim of the war of aggression launched by the Japanese militarists. As the main battlefield of the anti-fascist war in Asia, China resisted and pinned down over two thirds of Japan's total ground forces, with more than 35 million military and civilian casualties. By persisting, in the face of extreme hardships and difficulties, in the war of resistance against Japan for eight long years, in close cooperation with the allied countries of the Soviet Union and the United States, the Chinese people smashed the hegemonic ambitions of the Japanese militarists, which constituted an indelible contribution to victory in the world's anti-fascist war.

The victory in the anti-fascist war laid the foundation for world peace, opened the way to national liberation and promoted human progress, thus erecting an everlasting monument in the development of world civilization. We might say that the Charter of the United Nations, signed 50 years ago is carved on that monument.

Drastic changes have taken place with the passing of time, and history has proved to be the most vivid teaching material. The war of aggression launched by the fascists brought huge calamities to mankind. It also educated the world's people. As we are about to enter the twenty-first century, we look back with painful memories, the joys of success and, even more, deep reflection.

The past, if not forgotten, is a guide for the future. To take the road of peaceful development, it is imperative to have a correct understanding of and approach to history. Fascism brought great sorrows to mankind. That episode should never be forgotten, still less altered. To review history is not to be intoxicated with the victories of the past, but rather to draw a lesson from history with a view to developing and expanding the forces of peace, checking and removing all factors of war and avoiding the recurrence of tragedies.

One of the important political bases for the establishment and development of friendly relations between States is a correct approach to and deep reflection on the history of aggression. We express our strong concern at and condemnation of the remarks denying the history of aggression and even prettifying wars of aggression and colonial rule made time and again by some people in that Asian country that should be held responsible for launching the war. We hope that the country concerned will bear firmly in mind the historical lesson and continue to take the road of peaceful development so as to gain the understanding and trust of the peoples of Asia and the world at large.

Having paid a dear price for the holocaust of two world wars in this century, people have come to a deep understanding of how valuable peace is. The Chinese people, who have suffered a great deal from the scourge of aggression and war, know even better that peace did not come easily. At the coming turn of the century, we should ponder deeply the great importance of peace. Only with peace can there be human development and progress. A country's stability and prosperity require a peaceful international environment, and a peaceful world needs to be jointly maintained by the people of all countries. Peace can only be maintained by observing such norms governing international relations as respect for State sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, and by establishing, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, a new international political and economic order that is just and fair. Any practice of hegemony and power politics in international affairs will only trigger new friction in the international or regional situation or aggravate existing conflicts, posing a new threat to world and regional stability and peace.

History has shown time and again that differences in social systems and ideologies are not factors inevitably leading to war. Quite the contrary: countries of different social systems can unite and help each other when faced with a common enemy and a common challenge. Today, people throughout the world are still bound by the same destiny, facing the

arduous task of maintaining world peace and promoting common development. We should carry forward the spirit of unity fully displayed 50 years ago to build a twenty-first century of harmony and prosperity on the basis of respecting each other, seeking common ground while setting aside differences, living in amity and promoting common development. This is the best way for us to cherish the memory of those innocent victims of the Second World War and of those who have sacrificed their lives for justice and peace.

Pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace, China has all along committed itself to the lofty cause of peace and development. We are ready to work together with all other peoples in the world to eliminate for good the scourge of war and build a beautiful world of lasting peace and common development.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan): The year 1995 is truly historic, marking not only the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the sole universal Organization dedicated to international peace and cooperation, but also the end of the Second World War, the most destructive war in the history of humankind. In observing these landmarks, it is appropriate that we study seriously the lessons that history has to teach us and reaffirm our commitment to achieving lasting peace and prosperity in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. It is particularly meaningful that Member States were unanimous in proclaiming 1995 a year dedicated to the memory of the tens of millions of victims of the Second World War.

The proposed Declaration in Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the Second World War presents us with four very important tasks. First, all States are urged to

> "reaffirm the commitment to refrain from the use of threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations Charter". (*A/50/L.3, annex, para. 5 (a)*)

I wish to affirm here that Japan is determined never to waver from its commitment to contribute to world peace and prosperity, and that it does not, nor will it, resort to the use of force prohibited by its Constitution.

Secondly, it is important for States

> "To redouble their efforts to put an end to all conflicts and to save future generations from the scourge of new wars and racial hatred, *inter alia*, by drawing the lessons that emerge from the history of past conflicts". *(ibid., para. 5 (b))*

In this context, Japan welcomes the recent cease-fire agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and appeals to the parties to the conflict to exercise the utmost restraint.

Thirdly, States are called upon

> "To promote democracy and human rights and to support universal access to culture". *(ibid., para. 5 (c))*

It is extremely important for States to fulfil this most basic requirement, which, in turn, will enable them to pursue moderate, sound and appropriate foreign policies.

Lastly, but no less important, States are required

> "To focus their efforts on the objective of creating conditions for the general progress of humankind in larger freedom". *(ibid., para. 5 (d))*

To that end, Japan will do its utmost to alleviate poverty and illiteracy and to promote public health and welfare, particularly in developing countries.

The United Nations was created with a determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. By advancing the universal values enshrined in the Charter it has grown into a truly international Organization for the promotion of peaceful and cooperative relations between States. Reflecting with deep remorse upon the past, and as a responsible Member State, Japan has made sincere efforts to foster the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

Although the functions of the United Nations were often paralysed by the East-West confrontation that prevailed throughout most of the last 50 years, the new international situation resulting from the end of the cold war provides new opportunities for the United Nations and all its Member States to achieve the purposes stipulated in the Charter. The United Nations is thus expected to play a more active role in efforts towards

international peace and prosperity and in the formation of a new international order in the coming century.

To this end, all Member States must join in the effort to reform the Organization to ensure that it meets the growing expectations and demands of the international community. Reform of the Security Council to enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy is of particular importance in this regard. Japan is committed to participating actively in the reform of the Organization and intends to play a positive role in the new United Nations.

In conclusion, I should like to express to the delegation of the Russian Federation my appreciation of its initiative in proposing this agenda item. My delegation heartily supports this initiative and has become one of the sponsors of the draft resolution now before the General Assembly. I am confident that it will be adopted by consensus.

Japan looks forward to the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War as the beginning of a new era of peaceful and cooperative relations between all the nations of the world, centring round a strong United Nations.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): The more remote the events of 50 years ago, including the end of the Second World War, become to us, the more we must ask ourselves what people have learned from that lesson. The General Assembly, which at its last session unanimously adopted a resolution entitled "Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War", of which the Republic of Belarus was one of the sponsors, proclaimed this year as World Year of People's Commemoration of the Victims of the Second World War. Today this is a key issue in the work of the General Assembly.

All Members of the United Nations must unite to eliminate existing armed conflicts and to avoid such conflicts in the future. They must help to settle disputes between countries exclusively by peaceful means, and they must strengthen the role and effectiveness of the United Nations as the central element in the system of collective security and as an instrument for the promotion of international peace and security.

The Second World War was the result of a struggle between extremely powerful States for their spheres of influence and for world dominion. Under the pretext of protecting the rights of their compatriots and mastering new, "uncivilized" territories, they occupied entire countries. Racial hatred tried to establish a "new world order", and this brought suffering and death to hundreds of millions of people.

The war drew into its lethal orbit the territory of 40 States and three quarters of the population of the planet. Enormous material resources were destroyed, annihilated — resources that had been built by mankind over many centuries. Entire cities were wiped off the face of the Earth. Cultural centres and architectural monuments were destroyed, as were works of art and literature. Indeed, the future of mankind was threatened with annihilation. Enormous human resources and enormous human suffering were involved. A whole generation of people was consumed physically and morally by the Moloch of war. There was a complete metamorphosis. What is most valuable — human life — lost all its value.

At the same time, however, millions of people thought about the future and sacrificed their lives, in the fight against aggression, to protect their homelands, to defend the peace and security of other peoples. It could not have been otherwise, because every person has a right to live on this Earth regardless of nationality, skin colour or religion. But the price paid for that right was too high. Every fourth inhabitant of Belarus gave his life.

Common sense and human solidarity triumphed over barbarism, and that is how world civilization was saved. The Second World War made people more aware of the collective need to defend peace and to prevent aggression and war. The fact that attention is focused on this most important occasion — the anniversary of the end of the Second World War — is a tribute to the millions of people who died in the fields of battle. We have a moral duty to future generations, as we enter the twenty-first century — the third millennium — to create a new world and to remember the bitter experience of human civilization so that this horror will never leap off the pages of the history textbooks and back into real life.

The Charter of the United Nations reflects the fundamental conclusions arrived at by people after learning the lessons of the Second World War. But objective and thorough analysis is necessary if we are to get at the reasons for a tragedy of such scope. The danger of chaos and the unpredictability of international

affairs today, the possibility of the eruption of new conflicts, the harsh and bitter experience of the past, the memory of the generation that gave itself — these things call on the world community to focus all its efforts on eliminating the threat to international peace and security, avoiding armed conflict and resolving disputes by peaceful means. This is particularly relevant in the nuclear era.

Is it true that there are now no armed conflicts in the world? The answer is more than obvious. When the United Nations arrived at its fortieth anniversary, there were sorry statistics to report: 161 armed conflicts in the period from 1945 to 1985, almost half of the 172 States — 44 per cent of them — in the international community having each been involved in at least one armed conflict.

During the last four decades peace has prevailed on Earth for only 26 days, and the victims of warfare have numbered 25 million to 35 million. This is sad but true. Even today, the echoes of an earlier era in various parts of the world incite local conflicts. We have not yet found a prescription to free the world from armed conflict.

The threat of the outbreak of nuclear war, with all the attendant nightmarish, apocalyptic scenarios of nuclear winter and nuclear Armageddon, is now relatively slight. At the same time, though, there is a growing danger of armed conflicts breaking out because of continuing economic, political, territorial, ethnic, religious and other imbalances in relations between States.

Europe plays a special role in the world, and Europe looks very different today. Integrationist political processes are at work, and economic systems are converging. Having achieved favourable political conditions for reducing the military threat and strengthening stability by peaceful means, we are now trying to apply the principle of a minimal level of defensive adequacy.

None the less, what was supposed to be a successful Europe is increasingly becoming a zone of socio-economic, military and political instability, and old regional conflicts are breaking out anew as an effect of changes in Eastern Europe. Complications have arisen in many parts of the former Soviet Union, and innumerable conflicts are tearing Africa apart. Despite some successes, we have not yet found a solution to the Middle East problem. In all of these conflicts the number-one victim is the human being; the development of human civilization is indeed threatened.

Against this background, the situation in Belarus is unique from the standpoint of maintaining stability in Europe. Our country, which emerged from the vertiginous events following the end of the Second World War and was one of the founding Members of the United Nations, has no territorial claims whatsoever on its neighbours, and they have no such claims on Belarus. Our country has avoided serious religious or national conflicts with neighbouring States, and in its foreign policy Belarus intends to maintain this status quo and continue to advocate its policy in the international arena.

Hence, sensible coexistence and a policy for the common good are not merely possibilities: they are realities. But the question remains: why, having achieved real progress in many areas of science and technology, has mankind not been able to find a solution to social, political and economic problems without bloodshed? It would be naive to expect an easy answer to this question. However, the United Nations must not limit itself to a declaration such as the one to be adopted today, which is nevertheless necessary and timely, or a solemn meeting in memory of the victims of the Second World War. We have before us a task for the sake of which millions of people of many nationalities have shed their blood: to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. There is no more noble goal to which all Members of the United Nations could aspire.

Finally, we support the proposal that the draft resolution commemorating the end of the Second World War be adopted by consensus here today.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): Fifty years ago the world celebrated the end of the most destructive conflict in human history. We salute all those who served in freedom's cause and honour all those who made the ultimate sacrifice to create a better world. The best way to honour those who died 50 years ago is to rededicate ourselves today to the very same cause.

We pay homage to the victims of racial and ethnic hatred, in particular those who perished in death camps and in the Holocaust. We shall never forget their suffering; we commemorate their memory.

We give thanks for the blessings of democracy, justice, peace and prosperity. We are mindful that tyranny and intolerance have given way to hope and reconciliation in many corners of the world, but we are also mindful that we must persevere in facing the challenges still before us if we are to secure liberty, democracy, the rule of law and equal opportunity for future generations.

As we recall past accomplishments, we must also fix our sights on the future. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles and values of the United Nations Charter. We created the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We call on all States to dedicate themselves to practising tolerance, promoting international peace and security, creating conditions of larger freedom and reforming and strengthening the United Nations to meet new transnational challenges. In that spirit, let each of us recall the words of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, spoken in this Hall just two weeks ago:

> "with the help of God's grace, we can build in the next century and the next millennium a civilization worthy of the human person, a true culture of freedom. ...In doing so we shall see that the tears of this century have prepared the ground for a new springtime of the human spirit." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 6)*

Indeed, our ground today is well prepared. As President Clinton said at the ceremony in San Francisco commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Charter,

> "The challenge of building a good and lasting peace is in our hands, and success is within our reach."

Mr. Yaacobi (Israel): At the outset, allow me to express our appreciation to the Russian Federation for taking the initiative of bringing this issue before the General Assembly. Israel has lent its support to the Russian initiative to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. This is our moral obligation, not only to the fallen soldiers, the civilian victims and the honoured veterans, but also to the generations to come. The lessons of the Second World War are eternal: the evils of racism, the dangers of surrendering to despotism, the bankruptcy of appeasement and the strength of statesmanship and courage.

I was born in the land of Israel, but my parents came from Europe, where they both left behind large families. During the Second World War over 50 members of my family, including two of my grandparents, were exterminated by the Nazis. As a child growing up in Israel, I often wondered what I had missed by not knowing most of my family. As I became older, I understood that had my parents not left Europe when they did, there is no doubt that their fate would have been the same as that of their families.

But the survivors of the war have more bitter stories to tell. Many of them did not have the chance to know their parents, their brothers and sisters, their children.

For the State of Israel, the Second World War cannot be remembered without remembering the Holocaust — the systematic annihilation of six million Jews, 1.5 million of them children, by the Nazis.

The war decimated European culture and civilization that had been nurtured for centuries. The war shattered the entire world. During their 12-year reign of terror, the Nazis directed special fury against the Jewish people. Elie Wiesel put it best: "Not all victims were Jews. But all Jews were victims".

During those years the Jews of Europe were dehumanized and eventually destroyed. First they were stripped of all rights and dignity and rounded up into ghettos and separated from their countrymen. Starvation and disease hung over every Jewish ghetto. Death was a daily visitor.

As the war in Europe dragged on, the Nazis introduced their "final solution to the Jewish problem". Concentration camps and death camps were opened up throughout occupied Europe. It was in these camps that the Nazis attempted to extinguish the Jewish people as a whole. The Nazis failed in their ultimate goal of eliminating the Jewish people from the community of nations. However, the years between 1939 and 1945 marked the destruction of Jewish life in Eastern and Central Europe. Two thirds of European Jewry was obliterated in a total and systematic way. Communities rich in culture and spirit, commerce and science; communities that gave the world Franz Kafka, Albert Einstein, Martin Buber, Primo Levi and Karl Marx, were destroyed.

But the Holocaust is not only about the death of six million of our brothers and sisters. It is also about the bravery and the heroism of the Jewish people in the face of horror. Many Jews chose to resist the Nazis: in the forests with the partisans, in the Warsaw ghetto, in the Treblinka death camp and in countless other places, Jews condemned to death for the sole crime of being born Jewish faced their condemners and chose to die fighting, with dignity.

Jewish soldiers joined the fight against the Nazis. Wherever partisans stood and fought, Jews stood with them: in Poland, in Russia, in France, in Yugoslavia. The Jews of Palestine during the Mandate fought proudly in the Jewish Brigade of the British army. Those who were citizens of allied countries fought as Russians, Americans, Canadians, British, French, Australians and others.

I see a moral obligation to mention the brave individuals, both Jewish and non-Jewish who risked their own lives to save the lives of others. Schindler was not alone. There were righteous people in Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, France, Poland, Italy and other countries.

When the nightmare was over and the Nazis were vanquished, it was the hope of Jewish sovereignty that sustained the survivors of Nazi brutality. Upon war's end, the victorious allies set about the admirable goal of creating an international body that was committed to the cause of international peace and security and the establishment of a just society. Their efforts resulted in the United Nations, which today celebrates its fiftieth year.

Less than three years after the gas chambers ceased their operations, the United Nations passed the resolution on the partition of Palestine. This decision led directly to the birth of the State of Israel in May 1948. Since that time, Israel has become a home to hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors and their descendants. The State of Israel has become a haven for Jews fleeing persecution from around the world. At times, I think that if Israel had existed before the Second World War, many of those who perished could have been saved.

We all owe a debt of honour and gratitude to the nations that fought to end the war, to liberate the occupied countries and to give new hope to the peoples and nations of the world. It was their finest hour. I hope that we all act in a manner befitting the memory of the many millions who lost their lives to save others, to save humanity. It is upon us all to remember the lessons of the Second World War and the Holocaust: the price of powerlessness and the evils of hatred and racism. Today, as we mark the victory of good over evil, of democracy over dictatorship, the spectre of radicalism, racism and hatred still looms over us all.

Today, the United Nations Member States have an obligation to build a world based on tolerance and mutual respect. We must not slacken in our fight against the poverty and hopelessness that create fundamentalism and hatred. Our efforts must succeed.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): To celebrate the passage of 50 years since the end of the Second World War is indeed a very important occasion to pause and reflect. It is an opportunity to imbue our minds with the love of peace and tolerance and to be inspired by such a spirit in our daily conduct. It was that spirit which triumphed, five decades ago, over the forces of evil, of aggression and of occupation. Forces which threw humanity as a whole in the cauldron of a total war that razed villages to the ground, one that demolished cities, burned forests and farms, and claimed the lives of millions of people. A war that caused devastation of which many peoples continue to suffer to this day.

The object lesson of the Second World War was indeed a very cruel and bitter one. The horrifying experiences of humanity during that war should always remain before our eyes. My delegation believes that to celebrate this occasion which coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations is indeed one of great historical moment, because it affords us an opportunity to take stock once again of the events of the past and to draw the object lessons from such events that we may use in addressing the problems of the present world situation, a world situation where many people still languish under the yoke of colonialism and yearn to exercise their right to self-determination.

In fact, today's world is still beset by many dangers in the shape of economic and social problems that continue to threaten the stability of the majority of its peoples. Our world is also in the grip of many regional disputes and tensions that play havoc with the security of many regions. Such disputes and tensions are made worse by the continuing existence and

proliferation of nuclear weapons that threaten life everywhere on planet Earth.

One of the most important historical events that followed the end of the Second World War was the establishment of the United Nations as an international forum for the maintenance of international peace and security, the application of the rule of law, the settlement of disputes and crises by peaceful means, and promoting friendly relations and peaceful coexistence amongst States. We, the peoples of the world, who have placed our hopes in the United Nations to guarantee our security and maintain our independence, should, on this occasion, reaffirm our continued commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, because this is the only guarantee of protection against the ambitions of certain countries that ignore the principle of full sovereign equality of States and seek to use the bodies of the United Nations to serve their own ends. This tendency can be seen, *inter alia*, in the steering of those bodies toward the imposition of punitive measures against various peoples, not with the aim of prompting a response to specific demands, as those States claim, but with the aim of achieving premeditated ends. This indeed is a dangerous tendency in dealing with differences between States. What is worse is that those few States insist on holding the target peoples hostage to sanctions by keeping those sanctions in place for the longest possible time, without any regard for their tragic human consequences and their negative economic and social impact.

We call upon all the small countries here represented to hasten to agree among themselves on the introduction of a radical reform that would return the United Nations to what the peoples who had been victims to the scourge of war and colonialism wanted it to be. We should not continue to allow a few great Powers to dominate the United Nations and to exploit it for their own ends.

Although the Second World War ended with the withdrawal of armies from the theatres of military operations and with the guns falling silent, the serious consequences of the war are still with us. Those consequences are at the root of the backwardness of many peoples who have been made backward by the horrors inflicted upon them and the devastation their countries have suffered and continue to suffer as a result of the sowing of millions of mines that were left behind by the armies of the warring Powers which had fought their battles on the territories of those peoples. Those mines still claim innocent victims almost daily and impede efforts toward economic and social development.

The Libyan people is among those peoples who suffered and continue to suffer from the consequences of the war. Libya's territory was the theatre of operations for the armies of the Allies and the Axis Powers alike. When the warring armies departed, they left behind hundreds of tons of war debris, especially mines that were planted in our farms and deserts and under our very homes. Over the past 50 years, those mines continued to kill our innocent citizens. Available statistics prove that the number of those who have been killed by exploding mines is in the hundreds, not to mention the thousands who have suffered permanent injuries. On several occasions, my country asked the Powers concerned to furnish us with the information that would enable us to locate those minefields and requested those Powers to assist in clearing those mines.

Today, I wish to renew, through this Assembly, our request to the countries responsible for planting those mines to respond to the resolutions of this Assembly and of other international forums, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement. Those resolutions call on the countries concerned to provide the necessary information on those mines and other types of war debris, to provide technical assistance to remove them and to pay compensation for the damage they have caused.

The events of the Second World War have now become past history. What is important now is to look at the international situation that prevailed after the war and to consider the consequences it had. Historical facts show that, both before and after the war, many peoples were victims of aggression, domination and colonialism, and that such a situation had lasted, sometimes, for hundreds of years. Now that the manifestations of colonialism and foreign domination are about to disappear forever, the least the colonized people could expect is an apology from colonialist Powers to the peoples they colonized for the aggression, persecution and degrading treatment they inflicted on those colonized peoples. The former colonial Powers should pay those peoples fair compensation for the looting and plunder so that colonialism, with its consequent acts of aggression,

domination, occupation and exploitation, may be effaced for ever.

Mr. Velliste (Estonia): This year, 1995, marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of hostilities of the Second World War. Tens of millions of people perished in that war: soldiers and civilians, men, women and children. The memory of the Holocaust will forever remain a warning to humanity of acts committed by totalitarian and racist ideologies and societies that lack democratic control. Today we commemorate all victims of the war.

The end of the Second World War created conditions for establishing the United Nations. The countries recovering from the devastating war renewed their hope in the future. Despite the fact that, even today, cynical violence and bloodshed are taking place in many parts of the world, we cannot underestimate what has been done by the Organization to open up the prospect for a more peaceful world. The establishment of a community based on new principles — the United Nations — was one of the most remarkable results of the end of the Second World War.

It was in 1991 that the Republic of Estonia, once a member of the League of Nations, was finally able to join the Organization, stating its strict adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter. The goal of Estonia is the establishment of normal, productive relations with all countries. Lasting peace can only be assured through friendly and mutually trustworthy cooperation between States, based on compliance with internationally recognized norms and standards.

Now that 50 years have passed, the world has gained sufficient distance to allow an honest evaluation of the past. The legacy of the Second World War includes, among other things, a separate chapter on some countries, including my own, Estonia, that had to struggle with the consequences of this devastating war for decades. For Estonia, the Second World War was finally over only on 31 August 1994 — last year — when the very last foreign soldier left Estonian soil. A year later, on 26 September this year, the last remnant of the long occupation, the Paldiski nuclear facility, was dismantled. The ghosts of the past are gone. After 50 years, at least the lifetime of a whole generation, Estonia can continue on the path of democracy interrupted as a result of the collusion between Stalin and Hitler.

The best way to pay tribute to those who perished during the hostilities is to avoid further confrontation and enhance friendly relations between States. Conflicts often have a long history of open and hidden threats, of mistrust and aggressive claims. Estonia is calling upon all States to refrain from the use or threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country. The post-cold-war world can leave no room for such concepts as "near abroad" or zones of influence for attempts at a new division of the world, for "legitimate geopolitical interests" or the right to "armed protection of compatriots" in the territories of neighbouring States. Countries should make every effort to avoid actions undermining the goals set by the Charter of the United Nations.

Fifty years seems a sufficiently long time to allow the raw wounds to heal and to uncover the long-suppressed truth. We have therefore been gratified to note that this year a number of countries have taken significant steps, like setting up a compensation fund for the victims, admitting the errors of the past, or offering an apology for aggression. All these steps help to heal the old wounds and contribute to better relations among nations.

Let me conclude by expressing the conviction that together we shall continue to foster international peace and stability. Estonia, for its part, will pursue its policy of positive engagement, and calls upon all other States to do the same.

Mr. Wlosowicz (Poland): Fifty years ago, the Second World War came to an end. It was by far the most devastating war in the world's history. For Poland, its first victim, the war lasted the longest — five years, eight months and eight days. My country was particularly heavily afflicted by the atrocities of the war, but the war took a heavy toll of human life among all nations. Millions of people perished.

Questions concerning that part of the history of the world will always haunt us. Never will we stop wondering how the Holocaust was possible; never will we stop wondering how the whole war was possible.

The Second World War ended in victory which, unfortunately, could not be fully enjoyed by the Polish people, since it was not until 45 years after the Yalta Conference that we achieved the goal — for which Poles had fought over and above the call of duty — a free and sovereign State in a new and democratic Europe. Therefore, it was only recently that Poland, together with other States of the eastern part of the

European continent, reached the path leading towards integration into a free Europe.

During the most devastating of wars to date, intensive thought and dramatic efforts were being devoted to peace, and ways of making peace endure. Peoples and States, mindful of their tragic experience, desperately sought a world order once and forever free of war and the suffering that war brings.

Fifty years ago, the nations of the world signed the Charter of the United Nations. At the time, they set for themselves four goals: peace, equality, justice and development. But then, above all, the United Nations meant hope and belief that through common effort and wisdom, we would make the world a peaceful place to live in.

Last year, Poland launched an initiative seeking to delete from the Charter the reference to "enemy States". It is our conviction that the success of this initiative would become a symbol of the path towards peace on which we have embarked.

In our view, the very notion of "enemy" should disappear from our vocabulary and our thinking, and be replaced by a sincere appreciation of the true value of working together. The lessons of the Second World War should protect us from the atrocities that wars bring. And although we have not managed to wipe out the word "war" from the language of contemporary international relations, we must not lose our hope and faith. We need to redouble our efforts to promote democracy and respect for human rights.

At the same time, we must never take things for granted. We must never be complacent.

Let us now bow our heads and pay tribute to all the victims of the Second World War and their still grieving families. Let us also remember those who have lost their lives in all the wars that have occurred since then, and their grieving families.

The Polish delegation reiterates its support for the draft resolution before the Assembly today, support we have already expressed in associating ourselves with the statement made today by the European Union.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/50/L.3 and Corr.1.

I call on the representative of Israel for an explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution.

Mr. Yaacobi (Israel): The Jewish people can never forget the enormity of the Holocaust. The State of Israel, as the Jewish National Home, has a special obligation to remember. An obligation to the memory of the six million who perished in the European graveyard. And an obligation to the survivors who have rebuilt their lives in Israel and elsewhere.

This draft resolution does not mention the Holocaust, but I must. For the six million whose voices have been forever silenced. For the Jewish people. For the State of Israel. And for future generations.

Israel, therefore, cannot become a sponsor of this resolution. However, we will not request a vote.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.3 and Corr.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.3 and Corr.1?

Draft resolution A/50/L.3 and Corr.1 was adopted (resolution 50/5).

The President: The representative of France has requested to exercise the right of reply. I call on him.

Mr. Gaussot (France) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of the Marshall Islands once again today brought up the question of nuclear tests, although this has nothing to do with the agenda item we have been considering this morning. It mentioned specifically the tests carried out in the Pacific by "a colonial Power" (*supra, p. 29*).

I will not go back to the unfounded nature of the accusations made concerning these recent tests. The French delegation has already on several occasions refuted the assertions of a number of States on this subject. But France, a sovereign Power that is at home in the Pacific and that is included on that basis in

various regional cooperation organs, cannot accept the use — especially out of context — of offensive language that in effect impugns the legitimacy of its presence in that part of the world.

The President: Although the President of the General Assembly does not have the right to vote, I associate myself with the solemn commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and join my voice to those of the various speakers who paid tribute to the victims of that war and pledged to promote peace all over the world.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 36?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.34

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

34th plenary meeting
Friday, 20 October 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to draw the attention of members to General Assembly resolution 49/244 of 12 July 1995, by which the Assembly decided to proclaim the World Week of Peace, beginning on 24 October 1995, in solemn commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Turning to another subject, as all members are aware, the Special Commemorative Meeting for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will begin on Sunday, 22 October. As we prepare for this historic event, I should like again to impress upon delegations that their cooperation in observing rigorously the five-minute limit for each statement is indispensable for the timely and smooth conduct of the Special Commemorative Meeting. To assist speakers in keeping to the five-minute limit, a lighting-signal system has been installed on the speakers' rostrum, to the left of the speaker. Members have on their tables a one-page information note entitled "Length of statements" that explains in detail how the lighting-signal system works. I would urge all delegations to familiarize their speakers with this system.

Next, I should like to call the attention of Member States to the subject of the exercise of the right of reply during the Special Commemorative Meeting. As members will recall, at its 3rd meeting, on 22 September 1995, the General Assembly, taking into consideration the solemn nature of the Special Commemorative Meeting and the serious time and technical-service constraints, decided that statements in exercise of the right of reply during the Special Commemorative Meeting, if any, should be made only in written form, to be circulated as documents. I would be grateful for all delegations' cooperation in this respect.

Agenda item 156

Multilingualism

Draft resolution (A/50/L.6)

The President: Before calling on the first speaker on this agenda item, I should like to propose, if there is no objection, that the list of speakers for the debate on this item be closed at 12.30 p.m. today.

It was so decided.

The President: (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of France to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.6.

Mr. Ladsous (France) (*interpretation from French*): Pleased though I may be, on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary, to hail the United Nations contribution to the diversity of cultures, I would have much preferred not to have to address the Assembly this morning. Indeed, none of the many sponsors of the draft resolution that I have the honour to introduce would have taken such an

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initiative if the rules laid down by the United Nations regarding the use of languages had been properly applied. Here I wish to point out that 10 Member States have been added to list of sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.6: Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Liechtenstein, Malta, Oman, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

Since the adoption of the Charter, whose Article 111 provides that the versions in the several languages in which it was drafted are equally authentic, our predecessors in this House have constantly striven to maintain parity between the official languages — originally numbering five, and six since 1973, when Arabic was added to the list — and working languages of the various bodies. To French and English, which have been working languages from the start and which remain the two working languages of the Secretariat, the other official languages were successively added as working languages of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

We wish to support this use of several languages on a basis of equality, which we call multilingualism. We must support it, because it is being threatened in an insidious but real way. Indeed, no one disputes the fact that equal treatment by the United Nations of its official and working languages contributes to the development of a harmonious and rich international life through the promotion of cultural diversity.

None the less, infringements of this principle — some more serious, some less — have frequently been noted. The causes of such incidents are varied, but many of them occur under the pretext of insufficient material and financial means. I shall offer just one recent example. At the beginning of the current session, the General Assembly decided that, for budgetary reasons, there would be no more night meetings: work would stop at 6 p.m. Then delegates were asked whether, when the fateful hour of 6 p.m. arrived, they would be willing to continue to work without interpretation, because in accordance with the General Assembly's decision, interpreters would not be available after that hour. This is a typical example of how a decision can be distorted. Conference services are not limited to interpretation services, but in such cases people automatically think of cutting those services to save money.

This is but one of many situations in which delegations committed to plurilingualism must come forward, sometimes in unpleasant circumstances, to remind people of the fundamental right of States Members of the Organization to work in the official language of their choice and to have timely documentation in that language.

A great deal of will and determination is required for us to stick to the well-founded rule of respect for the principles of equality of languages. The anniversary of the United Nations provides us with another opportunity to regain control and refuse to go down the slippery slope of monolingualism, a practice which some people secretly feel would be a factor for simplification and savings, but which would actually engender a weakening of dialogue, a lack of interest in the United Nations and the unbridled development of bureaucracy and stereotypes.

The draft resolution on multilingualism, sponsored by some 68 States, is a way to respond, first of all, to the unacceptable reduction of budgets for translation and interpretation in recent years, precisely when the need for such services is constantly growing in all sectors of United Nations activities.

These services, however, are not the only ones involved. It is important that the Secretariat staff's language proficiency make possible a genuine circulation of information, documents, reports and studies in various languages. This factor must be taken into account in the recruitment and promotion of staff, for it is pointless to offer delegations a multilingual service if the heart of the Organization is not beating in time with that goal and if the Secretariat is unable to benefit from the various contributions available to it.

Finally, the teaching of languages must remain a priority in the policy of ongoing training for Secretariat staff.

Today more than ever we are persuaded that the future of the United Nations does not lie in abandoning the linguistic resources which are its wealth. We recently had outstanding examples of the road to take. The President's introductory statement, which gave an equal share to several official languages of the Organization, was a good augury for work on this agenda item. The address delivered a few days ago by His Holiness the Pope, which made use of each of the official languages, provided the Assembly with, I believe, very stirring inspiration. Now it is up to us to implement this spirit of exchange and dialogue, which everyone feels is needed at the dawn of the next 50 years of the United Nations.

But this will not result from mere solemn statements. Resolute, constant, stubborn action,

unswerving will and unremitting determination are needed. All of us together must show that we are capable of doing this. The adoption of the draft resolution before the General Assembly will help us in this, and that is why I warmly commend this text to the attention of all delegations.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Argentina also to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.6.

Mr. Sersale di Cerisano (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to address this Assembly on behalf of the 21 countries members of the Ibero-American Summit: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Uruguay and Venezuela. The 21 countries of the Ibero-American Summit, who are among the sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.6, support the text before the Assembly, which was submitted in both Spanish and French.

Paragraph 17 of the Bariloche Declaration, adopted only a few days ago, on 17 October, by the 21 Heads of State of the Ibero-American Summit, states:

> "Since the Ibero-American cultural heritage and its means of expression constitute a common heritage for our nations, it is indispensable to protect and promote it in all possible forums, especially in those organizations, agencies and institutions where it is an official language".

Inspired by this thought of our Heads of State, we have endeavoured to promote this organization's use of the six official languages which, for us, stand on an equal footing in terms of the treatment of the Members of this Organization. What we mean to propose is that we comply with decisions that have been adopted over the last 50 years of the history of this Organization. In other words, the original five, and now, with the addition of Arabic, six languages must be treated on the same level. But we are facing a different development. For questions of practicality and for the sake of efficiency, quite often this enriching diversity is neglected. And this marks a trend that we would wish to avoid.

The proposal of the countries of the Ibero-American Summit and the other sponsors has no budgetary implications. We are simply seeking to ensure compliance with what Member States have decided. Therefore, invite Member States and request the Secretary-General to ensure the strict implementation of the resolutions establishing language arrangements for the United Nations, about which we give all necessary data in the preambular part of the draft resolution. This, of course, has implications with respect to recruitment, because we wish this treatment of the six languages to be reflected in the Organization's recruitment policies.

Also in the operative part, we address the Secretariat, urging it to take these provisions into consideration when it comes to recruitment and promotion. This has implications in other areas also: in the field of training, where we are very much concerned that we do not see equal treatment in the teaching of the six official languages. We call upon the Assembly to ensure that this not continue and that existing provisions be followed.

A further point of concern to us and which we wish to try to remedy goes beyond Headquarters. Since the United Nations, through its documentation, materials and scientific and technological research, disseminates a great deal of material, is that high-calibre knowledge produced here and throughout the system disseminated in all official languages? Who has access to that work and that documentation? It is our university researchers, our technicians and our students at all levels of education; and this is the very soul of how the work of the United Nations is absorbed in our countries.

We, the sponsors of this draft resolution, want to ensure that the work of the United Nations, which contributes to all areas that enhance the well-being of mankind, will be disseminated in the official languages so that the work of this Organization may be properly carried out in all Member and observer countries.

I repeat that this draft resolution does not have budgetary implications. It should be considered as seeking to fulfil decisions we have taken. Consistent with our own decisions with respect to rationalization of the work of the Assembly, we propose a review of this matter within two years.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*interpretation from French*): The draft resolution on multilingualism that is before the Assembly reminds us, following another series of initiatives of the same nature, that our Organization is not a monolithic being, a soulless bureaucracy, but a living organism within which human beings — men and women from different regions of the world, heirs to rich and

historic cultures — are brought together to collaborate on an equal footing, while respecting the values and principles proclaimed by the United Nations Charter. The world, in its diversity and richness, is thus associated with the action of the United Nations. This association cannot and must not ever be based on exclusion.

Now, linguistic impoverishment, like any other form of impoverishment, does involve exclusion. We note this in the economic and social area, with poverty, and in the area of education, with illiteracy. We note it also in the scientific area, where there is a growing gap between those who have access to knowledge and progress and those excluded from these things. Consequently, it seems more than ever essential to ensure that this Organization, now 50 years old, does not find itself cut off from an important source of its wealth and its interest — that is to say, from its universality.

Multilingualism is one of the foundations of the United Nations — indeed, its very essence. It is one of the expressions of the Organization's universal character — the major element in a multilateral and multidisciplinary dialogue between nations in the service of peace and economic and social development, as well as the promotion of human rights and public freedoms.

There would be a sort of misunderstanding, but also of contempt for cultures, amounting to culpable negligence *vis-à-vis* modes of thought and intellectual and philosophical concepts of the world, if we were not to use the official languages, so fortunately, so wisely bestowed on the Organization, and which are one of its most beautiful forms of expression. To our way of thinking, this usage is an area of respect for "the other" and for others — for our differences, which constitute our wealth and the very source of harmonious and balanced international collaboration between sovereign States.

As this Organization celebrates its jubilee, should we not, rather, confirm its international dimension and commit ourselves to respect for the will expressed by its Member States, which recognized the following as official and working languages — Spanish in 1948, Russian in 1968, Chinese and Arabic in 1973 — having, at the creation of the Organization, established English and French as official and working languages of the Secretariat? In this regard, let us also recall that, according to article 111 of the Charter, the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts of the Charter are equally authentic.

This constitutional obligation and respect for the decisions of the General Assembly are imposed on us unreservedly, and they must apply both at the level of bodies and at the level of meetings, including informal ones, and within the Secretariat and in relations with Member States. This, in our view, is not just a matter of principle but also a matter of quality and effectiveness, because the wealth, the nuances and the fullness of oral or written expression are authentic and convincing only when conceived and put forward in the mother tongue or in a language learned in school or university. Claude Levi-Strauss, whose thinking transformed man's vision of man, reminded us that language is an aspect of human reason which has its own reasons, and that man does not understand that.

Consequently, the draft resolution before the Assembly is of extreme importance to the Government of Monaco. It is not an administrative text inspired by some purely bureaucratic or formal reflex. On the contrary, it touches upon the very nature of this Organization — its multilateral character, its universal, international dimension, its roots and its foundations. Now, the most beautiful of plants cannot survive if its roots die, and the most solid of buildings cannot stand for long when its foundations are fragile or deficient.

To me it seems perfectly justifiable, to avoid any such failure, for the United Nations this year, forcefully and with conviction, to recall its commitment to one of its irreplaceable sources of wealth, its multilingualism. That is why the delegation of Monaco invites the Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.6 of which the Principality of Monaco is one of the sponsors.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): Diversity is a defining characteristic of all human groups. We must accept it and recognize it as a manifestation of freedom. In these times, when science, technology, communications and data processing are giving rise to profound changes in the very structure of knowledge and in our individual and collective destinies, it is essential not to lose sight of the fact that universal culture is diverse.

It is on the basis of this concern that Benin has joined numerous other delegations in sponsoring draft resolution A/50/L.6, on multilingualism. Our purpose is to restore respect for the principle of the equality of the official languages of the Organization and of the working languages of the Secretariat — in short, to ensure

observance of the principle of diversity of languages and cultures within the United Nations system.

The impact of language goes far beyond the realm of communication. It also enhances cultural heritage and intellectual experience. Language is the means and the product of culture as the tool of thought. This is why, as we come to create new avenues for international cooperation and social progress, we consider it important that all players be in a position to make their own contribution to the maturation and consolidation of principles that will serve as the foundation of international relations. This purpose can be pursued dynamically and can produce meaningful results only if the movement supporting it encourages respect for the cultural identity of its members, safeguarding pluralism and drawing nourishment from the richness of that diversity. It is in this way that our great ideals will benefit from the broadest possible support.

The United Nations is the sole universal forum for dialogue, consultation and negotiation. Our aim should be to facilitate strict respect for the right to make oneself understood and to understand others, because proper understanding of the issues being debated is our best assurance of the richest and most productive participation.

I wish also to emphasize the importance that we attach to this draft resolution by stressing that, today, the players in international life are growing in number and in diversity. We must therefore act urgently to achieve ever greater democratization of international life. We believe that the opportunity to express oneself and to participate contributes to that democratization by taking into account the points of view and concerns of the "silent" — those who are reduced to silence or who remain silent because they cannot participate actively in debates or make good use of the documentation available to them.

For all these reasons I am convinced that this draft resolution will be welcomed and will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon) (*interpretation from French*): Lebanon is a country where, in addition to the official language, Arabic, foreign languages are widely spoken. French and English are common languages which the great majority of Lebanese learn and use from their earliest days at school and in universities and their everyday life. Public and private primary education teaches French and English along with Arabic. In our universities, those two languages are also used for technical and literary courses.

Our country, a coastal State of the Mediterranean, is privileged to have invented and disseminated the world's first alphabet. We have therefore always understood that the use of several languages is a source of enrichment, helping people to grasp nuances of meaning in a Manichean world that tends to over-systematize values to the detriment of a perception of reality. That is why my delegation is a sponsor of the draft resolution before us.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, there is a need to set the record straight by stressing the equal importance that the official and working languages of the General Assembly should enjoy in international life. It is essential to ensure that the various official and working languages be used in equal measure within the United Nations.

It is common knowledge that there is a growing imbalance, to the disadvantage of certain official and working languages, in particular through the systematic delay recorded in the issue of documents. We propose that the imbalance we have noted be corrected; in order to do so, certain measures must be taken to give effect to the concept of the universality of the United Nations through its corollary, multilingualism. It is necessary that the same opportunities be available to each Member State of the Organization, regardless of its official or working languages, to understand and express itself on the issues before it without hindrance.

Multilingualism is the concrete manifestation through language of a continuing enrichment through the shades of meaning specific to the sensibility of each culture. It is therefore clear why it is imperative to tackle the shortcomings evident in the inadequate functioning of multilingualism in our Organization. Our purpose goes beyond coldly theoretical and calculated egalitarianism in the use of official or working languages. Rather, it pertains to the richness, complexity and diversity of humanity itself.

It is by restoring the effective and harmonious use of languages within our Organization that we can do the international community a great service and provide every opportunity to delegations and representatives to understand and express concepts and values in all their fullness in their mother tongue or the language of their

choice, with the sole aim of better realizing the purposes of the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Ould Ely (Mauritania) (*interpretation from French*): The inclusion on the General Assembly's agenda of the item on multilingualism undoubtedly reflects the growing interest of many delegations. It is, in fact, the manifestation of the increasing importance of the role of language to international relations. Given an insufficiently effective and systematic use of languages within the United Nations, this is the proper place for the issue to be considered. Many Member countries are increasingly concerned that the numerous resolutions and other rules governing the linguistic regime in the various United Nations bodies be reflected in the parity of languages and the best available interpretation and translation services.

We must acknowledge the fact that the official and working languages are used unequally within our Organization. Faced with this situation, Member States have repeatedly drawn the attention of the Secretariat officials concerned to this problem, which is becoming more and more disturbing. Indeed, the importance of this matter is reflected in the number of decisions and resolutions that have been adopted in this regard without ever achieving their desired aims. The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations therefore seems to us to be a propitious occasion to reaffirm our earlier decisions, but especially to seek ways of putting them into practice.

The universality of the United Nations requires that each Member State have the opportunity to express itself in the official language of its choice and to make itself understood in that language without discrimination or hindrance. Over and above the needs of communication, the parity of languages — particularly the working languages of the Secretariat — is also a source of major concern to many delegations. That is why it is necessary to ensure that this long-sought parity at last be reflected in the recruitment of staff and in their methods of work.

The interpenetration of cultures fostered by the remarkable progress that has been achieved in modern communications has reduced distances and differences. The world of today, which we call the "global village", needs understanding and mutual cooperation among peoples and nations more than ever before. In this respect, languages continue to play a pre-eminent role as the key to all mutual understanding, the universal basis of peace and harmony. My delegation is therefore happy to support the draft resolution on multilingualism and calls on all other delegations to support it.

Mr. Daouda Diabate (Côte d'Ivoire) (*Interpretation from French*): I am happy to be able to speak for the second time on behalf of my country, Côte d'Ivoire, before this noble and historic commemorative session of the General Assembly, which is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, in order to address a subject of extreme importance: the draft resolution on multilingualism.

Côte d'Ivoire, a sponsor of this draft resolution, would like to recall that multilingualism, whose importance for the future development of the Organization's activities and its Member States was perceived and stressed so appropriately by the founders of our Organization from the start, far from being a factor for discord and division, in fact allows the United Nations to be enriched by our diversity and our differences.

In this regard, a quick review of the documents shows how long this matter has been with us. It is addressed by resolutions dating back to 1946 and 1966, to mention only two.

Paradoxically, despite this long history, the issue of multilingualism is as acute and timely as ever. Thus, on 20 December 1966, the General Assembly, in its resolution on multilingualism, requested the Secretary-General

> "to study the methods which should be used to ensure a more equitable use of the working languages of the Organization and a better balance among those languages in the recruitment of staff at all levels, and in particular at the higher levels, of the Secretariat, and to include his conclusions on this question in his future reports" *(resolution 2241 B (XXI), operative paragraph)*.

No one could challenge the relevance of this request to the current situation. Although it dates from 1966, it could validly be inserted into the draft resolution we are debating today. That simple fact is enough to tell us how overriding is the need to move forward in adopting and implementing our resolutions.

Neither the difficulties of the moment, nor the structural problems of the United Nations, which have often led representatives and others who work at the

Organization to agree to work in a language other than their official or working languages, should allow the elevation into a principle of a situation born *a priori* of compromise. Otherwise, in the long term, this would lead to the certain impoverishment of our Organization which, by virtue of the cultural and linguistic diversity it comprises, constitutes a true source of wealth.

In the light of this observation, my delegation feels that the commemorative session of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations should present an opportunity to reaffirm the fundamental importance of the diversity of cultures, as well as the need to practice multilingualism within the United Nations in order to ensure the harmonious development of international life.

Consequently, the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire, a sponsor of the draft resolution on multilingualism, invites the Assembly to adopt it by consensus.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The delegation of Spain supports the views that have been expressed in this debate by the delegation of Argentina, as representative of the country now acting as interim Secretary of the Ibero-American Conference.

Article 1, paragraph 4 of the Charter defines our Organization as a centre for "harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends" of the United Nations.

That is the foundation for the universal orientation that characterizes this Organization, whose practical reflection lies in the fact that 185 Member States are represented today in the General Assembly.

So established, the mission of harmonizing the diverse aims of States within the setting of the United Nations has a corollary, which is the need to articulate a dialogue among us all which, if it is to be fruitful, must be informed by the cultural pluralism that the Members of the Organization bring to their work.

The General Assembly which, indeed, could not have done less, supported this necessity in one of its first decisions by adopting, in resolution 2 (I) of its first session, on 1 February 1946, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which laid down as official languages in United Nations organs Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Two years later, resolution 262 (III) of 11 December 1948 established Spanish as a working language, as well as English and French. Reaffirming its commitment to the diversity of cultures represented in the United Nations, the General Assembly extended to Russian in 1968 and to Arabic and Chinese in 1973 the status of official and working languages of the General Assembly.

Thus, at present, Spanish, together with Arabic, Chinese, English, French and Russian, are the official and working languages of the General Assembly and its Committees and Subcommittees, as well as of the Security Council and other organs of the United Nations.

Accordingly, the conditions required not only for the enrichment of deliberations within our Organization, but also for public opinion in our countries to feel able to identify with our work seem to have been met.

For my country, Spain, which lives in linguistic pluralism in its own society, the defence and strengthening of the principle of the use of different official languages in our work and deliberations takes on a particular importance.

In this respect, and as far as Spanish is concerned, my delegation wishes to reiterate its firm desire that the Secretariat should take great care to apply the provisions pertaining not only to the effective and reliable translation of official documents and the prompt distribution of such documents once translated, but also to the need for availability of interpretation services in the various official languages at all meetings that require them.

Likewise, it is particularly important to my delegation that the Organization, when it recruits personnel, should ensure that such personnel have a command of and use at least one of the six official languages of the United Nations. This, of course, should be supplemented by ensuring the continued training of such professional staff in the knowledge of the official and working languages.

Moreover, my delegation believes it important to ensure that the present courses for the teaching of Spanish, as well as those for the other official and working languages, should at all levels remain able to respond to the clear interest in knowing a language that is spoken by hundreds of millions of people.

Also, aware of the need for our Governments and our citizens to have the necessary information regarding the work of the United Nations, my delegation believes that the Organization's archive and library services and

its data banks must be available for use in all the official languages.

My delegation, of course, is aware of the financial difficulties our Organization is experiencing. However, we believe that this cannot be an argument for the obvious intellectual impoverishment and concomitant loss of effectiveness for the United Nations that would result from a careless application of the Organization's current language arrangements.

These are the reasons that have prompted the Spanish delegation to lend its support to the request for inclusion on the agenda of this session of an additional item entitled "Multilingualism", which is under consideration by the General Assembly today.

I wish to underscore that for my country it was a source of special satisfaction to sign this request, together with all the other States members of the Ibero-American Conference. It is an additional source of satisfaction that, on the eve of the session that brings us together today, the Ibero-American Summit, meeting in Bariloche, Argentina, affirmed, in the solemn Declaration adopted there by the Heads of State and Government of Ibero-American countries, that it is indispensable to protect and promote Spanish in those organizations, agencies and international institutions in which it has official status, as is obviously the case with the United Nations.

The delegation of Spain, which is among the sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.6, trusts that this text will be favourably received by the Assembly, as merited by its content and its broad sponsorship.

Mrs. Decerega-Smith (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation supports the statement made by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Ibero-American Conference.

My delegation will base its statement on the item entitled "Multilingualism" on a letter written 25 years ago to the Secretary-General of the United Nations by the Permanent Representative of Panama. Ambassador Illueca, who holds the same post now as he did then, indicated in that letter that he was among the Spanish-speaking Latin American representatives who at one stage embarked upon a campaign to ensure that the use of Spanish should be adopted in the interpretation and documentation services on an equal footing with the other working languages of the General Assembly and its organs.

Ambassador Illueca also said that he was alluding to that campaign in order to emphasize his concern at the fact that such use on an equal footing was not being observed, as well as his view that much remained to be done and that financial and other difficulties did not justify failure to comply with the various resolutions the General Assembly had adopted with respect to the use of languages in the United Nations.

Moreover, he stressed that he did not wish a concern pertaining to a cultural consideration to appear in a political light. As a Latin American, his concern was based on elements such as the need of the United Nations to find the means to achieve linguistic internationalism. Internationalism in the United Nations is interculturalism. That feature is directly linked to the foundations and purposes of the United Nations, and the oral and written word is the most immediate instrument to bring out the full value of each culture. An international organization with the calling of the United Nations would be threatened with impoverishment if it spoke and wrote but a single language.

Ambassador Illueca went on to say in his letter that Latin America, by virtue of the characteristics of its physical and spiritual development, presented a case of exceptional linguistic unification. The search for Latin American expression was achieved through a cultural melting pot, to which its oral and written language is faithful testimony. If appropriate use is not made of Spanish in the United Nations, representatives of a culture of which this language is a fundamental part cannot participate equitably. To impose on us a single language, which is not ours, would be to disregard the fact that language is an instrument of dialogue and therefore constitutes an essential instrument in the work of the United Nations.

Those are some of the points set out in Ambassador Illueca's letter. My delegation believes that everything said there remains valid today.

With the passage of time, other languages have achieved the right of expression in the United Nations. This Organization must be consistent with the multilingualism that is its nature. A few days ago, His Holiness Pope John Paul II reminded us that there is a sovereignty based on culture, and that for all States Members of the Organization to be able to exercise that sovereignty in the United Nations requires that all officially recognized languages should find the broadest possible room for expression.

Panama has held this position for many years, in New York as in other specialized agencies of the United Nations system. In this we have had the support of the other Latin American delegations and of the delegation of Spain, the country from which we inherited a language on which we have made our own mark.

My delegation trusts that the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.6 will be adopted and that its application will be a task of the greatest importance to the United Nations.

Mr. Nothomb (Belgium) *(interpretation from French)*: Belgium is happy to be able to sponsor the draft resolution on multilingualism, which the representative of France just presented today. We feel, indeed, that this matter is an important one. Belgium is not only among the 44 countries that speak French; it is itself a multilingual country. Belgium in fact has three official languages, corresponding to the three linguistic communities which make it up. Both history and experience have shown us that respect for multilingualism, based on the equality of official languages, is a factor for communication and for drawing people together. It is also a crucial factor in our unity. If my country finds that this is an important element at the national level, the logic of its necessity at the international level becomes quite obvious.

The diversity of cultures finds expression in the United Nations, in particular, through the equality among official and working languages. This testifies to the respect which this Organization accords to the expression of the dominant cultures of this planet, which is a guarantee of a better understanding of others, of greater esteem, of better appreciation of what we all have in common. Each language, indeed, is imbued with its own particular spirit, a certain vision of the world that would of necessity be diminished if it could not be expressed.

Belgium thought that it was appropriate in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations for this principle to be recalled because it has noted with regret that it was not always adequately respected. While the pressure of the moment has at times justified this, we find that situations that should have remained the exceptions are tending to become the rule, and that it is more and more common for documents not to be available in time in all the official languages, or for the interpretation services to be unable to keep up with the multiplication of informal meetings.

A certain flexibility has often been shown in this respect. Even though this may be usual, it should not make us forget the principle which this draft resolution is intended to recall and repeat. The fact that the representatives of our Governments here at the United Nations generally speak English should not make us forget that the people in our capitals need to be informed as quickly as possible in the language they know, in order to react promptly.

The story of the Tower of Babel does not need to be recounted in detail to show the importance of this principle. To be sure, sometimes one might feel that the United Nations seems to produce an enormous volume of words, and so one might question their proliferation in several languages. The fact is that words have value, as this Assembly is well aware. If certain words that now have universal currency and acceptance have acquired their meaning and substance as a result of our discussions, it is precisely because of this juxtaposition of differing or similar interpretations given to them by the particular vision of the various languages that define them. These languages are the reflection not only of a culture, but also of a history and a state of mind; they are integral parts of a patrimony.

The United Nations must remain the guardian of this wealth of dialogue which it wishes to foster. Otherwise, it would be failing in its calling as a universal body. It also would run the risk of being less highly regarded from the outside. Moreover, it is important for its message to be understood by public opinion. This calling should not be compromised by practical and financial considerations. If that were so, the United Nations would in a way lose its soul: indeed, to communicate is to nurture a way of thinking that has many shapes and facets, but reaches to the widest possible horizons and is based on tolerance.

Mr. Kumamaru (Japan): Before making this statement, I would like to note that the delegations of the Republic of Korea and Thailand wish to associate themselves with the views it contains.

The delegation of Japan would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, in which the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to ensure that personnel recruited by the different bodies of the Organization have a command and use at least one of the six official languages, in addition to one working language of the Secretariat. In our view, requiring a command of two of the six official

languages would discriminate excessively against personnel whose mother tongue is not one of these languages. Consideration must be given to personnel not born into cultures that utilize one of the official United Nations languages, and therefore do not benefit from the current language arrangements. Already at a disadvantage, they should not be required to have command of yet another foreign language.

My delegation supports the idea that the United Nations should promote cultural diversity. To do that, however, it should avoid unfairly penalizing those cultures not associated with the six official languages of this Organization. Japan therefore proposes the following amendments, and recommends that the decision on the draft resolution be postponed until informal consultations are held.

First, we propose that the word "ensure" in the first line of paragraph 3 be replaced by the word "encourage". And secondly, at the end of paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, the following language should be added: "taking into account the difficulties faced by personnel whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages".

Mrs. Teo-Jacob (Singapore): My country is perhaps fortunate that two of the official United Nations languages, English and Chinese, are also two of the official languages of Singapore. This draft resolution, if passed, will not affect us too much one way or another. We therefore speak with some objectivity and with no vested interests.

(spoke in Chinese)

We have no vested interests.

(spoke in English)

It is from this standpoint that we would like to seek clarification on a few points before any action is taken. Our concerns relate in particular to paragraph 3. As drafted, paragraph 3 suggests that there is a clear difference between the official languages and the working languages of the United Nations. However, as we all know, rule 51 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly makes it very clear that Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are both official and working languages of the United Nations. This point is in fact plainly stated in the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution.

It is therefore all the more puzzling why paragraph 3 expresses this simple point in such an obscure, convoluted and indeed misleading way. If recast in plain English, what paragraph 3 is saying is simply that the Secretary-General should ensure that personnel recruited by the United Nations should know two official languages of the United Nations. This simple point has been obscured by the use of deliberately opaque language. I hope it was only a mistake of drafting.

There is another crucial ambiguity in paragraph 3. This is in the phrase "personnel recruited". As now drafted, it is unclear whether the phrase refers to personnel that will be recruited in the future, or whether it refers to personnel that have already been recruited and are now working in the United Nations. Without qualification, the phrase "personnel recruited" could well refer to past, present or future. There are problems in any case. Are we to understand that people who have already been recruited by the United Nations who are not so fortunate as to know two official languages should therefore have their appointments terminated forthwith by the Secretary-General? If such a harsh measure is not contemplated, is it therefore the intention of the draft resolution that these unfortunates should be retrained by the Secretariat, as seems to be implied by the eighth preambular paragraph? If so, where will funds for this retraining come from?

If the phrase "personnel recruited" is intended to refer to personnel that will be recruited in the future, then the effect of this draft resolution, if it is passed, will be to systematically and systemically discriminate against nationals of countries not so fortunate as to have any of the official United Nations languages as their native languages. If nationals of these countries should aspire to work for the United Nations, they will face the daunting task of learning two new languages. Few may qualify.

This would be a grave injustice, particularly since most of the countries that are in this unfortunate situation would be the smaller and less developed countries. By and large, it will be nationals of the advanced developed countries, particularly those from Europe — and I would like to point out that four out of the six official United Nations languages are European languages — who would henceforth have the best chance of being recruited by the United Nations. This would detract from the universal and multicultural character of the United Nations. I hope that this is not the intention of this draft resolution.

Let me conclude by reiterating that Singapore has no vested interest in this issue. But precisely because we have been able to take an objective look at this matter, we have concluded that this is not as simple or straightforward an issue as it might seem at first glance. We suggest that before we take any action on this draft resolution, the Secretariat should clarify the points I have raised and all delegations should be given more time to reflect on the Secretariat's answers. The United Nations has operated for 50 years with its present language arrangements. A pause for reflection will do the Organization no harm. On the other hand, we may well regret precipitate action.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: Tunisia's belief that openness to the outside world enriches the various cultures of the world, draws peoples together and contributes to overcoming factors of division and confrontation. At the level of the United Nations, such openness finds expression in the coexistence and harmony that we seek between the official and working languages approved by the Charter.

Tunisia, with its age-old civilization which has always been characterized by moderation, is in favour of maintaining and strengthening the humanitarian and spiritual principles upon which the United Nations was founded and is in favour also of strengthening cultural and humanitarian interaction between communities.

At the domestic level, and in the interests of cultural openness to our neighbours in the north of the Mediterranean basin, Tunisia has concluded agreements with both Italy and France to enable Tunisian citizens to receive certain television broadcasts from those two friendly countries. There is no doubt that the accelerating technological progress in the areas of communications and culture will contribute greatly to reducing distances, to propagating ideas, to bringing the peoples of the region closer together and, thereby, to eliminating any contradictions that may set them apart.

At the external level, Tunisia has focused on promoting harmonious relations with other countries in consonance with an ever-renewed vision and with principles that are bound to open up promising vistas for peoples on the basis of cooperation, coexistence and common interests.

This outlook has been given concrete form in many areas such as emigration. In this regard, Tunisia is working to find appropriate formulas that would make the phenomenon of emigration a factor of convergence and mutual enrichment in terms of human values and culture, while making it an economic bridge between the South and the North.

At the same time, I should like to say that the proclamation of 1995 as the United Nations Year for Tolerance is of special significance to us. Our support for the draft resolution on multilingualism within the United Nations and our commitment to consolidating this principle is, in our view, a contribution we make towards the strengthening of this noble tendency and towards combating parochialism and rejection of the other. Consequently, it is an effective contribution to the promotion of tolerance, openness and fruitful constructive cooperation between individuals and amongst communities and peoples.

(spoke in French)

Tunisia welcomes the inclusion of this agenda item on multilingualism in the United Nations. Consideration of this topic at a time when the international community is preparing to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations has a double meaning.

To affirm the multilingual calling of the United Nations is, first of all, to pay tribute to the founding fathers of this great institution, who in their wisdom wanted this Organization, which emerged from a destructive war caused by a lack of understanding and rejection of difference, to be a symbol and a manifestation of respect for "the other" in all his diversity.

Contrary to totalitarian ideologies, the principles of our Organization emphasize respect and call for safeguarding differences at the level of individuals and of the peoples that constitute the international community. Differences are to be seen as mutual enrichment, for the originality of peoples is a contribution, an input on all sides to universality itself. Far from seeking uniformity and the levelling of differences, the philosophy at the foundation of the San Francisco Charter is a declaration of faith in the freedom of individuals and the right of peoples to diversity.

Today's discussion of multilingualism is also a very happy coincidence. Recalling the importance of linguistic diversity within the United Nations is one of the main elements of the overall thinking taking place in many

forums to contribute to renewing the United Nations and to instilling new dynamism in it.

Although this thinking on the future of the Organization is far from complete, and to the contrary, is expanding in scope thanks to the many efforts made in that direction, Tunisia hopes that the question of multilingualism will elicit due interest and will be an important element of any plan agreed upon to increase the efficiency and influence of our Organization.

It goes without saying that the reaffirmation by all — in the academic world and in the field — of the international community's interest in recognizing and consolidating linguistic diversity must, at the same time, be accompanied by concrete actions and daily gestures to ensure harmonious, mutually beneficial and mutually fruitful existence for all cultures.

In other words, Tunisia feels that the principle of respect for the use of all official languages recognized by the Charter must be reflected in reality in all United Nations meetings. No matter how valid a reason might be, in our view it should not be a pretext for discriminatory practices that do not respect the will of Member States and trample upon the principles of linguistic equality desired by the founding fathers of the Organization.

Mr. Yoogalingam (Malaysia): The draft resolution (A/50/L.6) before us embodies a concept dear to all of us, namely multilingualism. Overall, the draft resolution would contribute to the promotion of multilingualism in the Organization. Monolingualism in this Organization poses problems for all of us.

In Malaysia, the national language is Bahasa Malaysia which is also the medium of instruction in our tertiary institutions. Yet the Malaysian language is not one of the United Nations languages. Despite the fact that Malaysia's own national language is not one of the United Nations languages, we continue to participate in the work of the Organization, through the use of one of the official United Nations languages.

Malaysia therefore welcomes the thrust of the draft resolution. However, paragraph 3 poses problems for us. By requesting the Secretary-General to ensure that personnel recruited by the various bodies of the Organization have a command of and use at least one of the six official languages in addition to one working language of the Secretariat it would only place at a disadvantage those whose mother tongue is not one of the United Nations languages, for instance Malaysia. It would be grossly unfair and unhelpful for applicants to know more than one United Nations language. This would discriminate against those of us who are already disadvantaged. It would prevent the nationals of these countries, who I daresay constitute a large number, from serving in the United Nations civil service. In the quest to strike parity among the United Nations languages, those already disadvantaged would be further discriminated against.

My delegation is aware of resolution 2480 B (XXIII) adopted on 21 December 1968. The language as reflected in the draft text before us departs from the spirit and the substance of the 1968 resolution.

Taking that into account, my delegation would like to propose two options: the first being to delete paragraph 3 and the other that it be amended to read as follows:

> "Requests the Secretary-General to take into account the difficulties faced by applicants whose mother tongue is not one of the official languages when recruiting and promoting personnel for different bodies of the Organization."

As we have not had sufficient time to consider the draft resolution, we would request the sponsors to exercise patience and understanding for those of us who have serious problems with the text. In this regard, I wish to appeal for that the decision on the draft resolution to be deferred. However, in the event that this appeal is not acceptable, we request that action be taken on the amendment proposed by my delegation and that, if necessary, we take a vote on the draft resolution on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis.

The President: I would request members to submit amendments to the Secretariat in written form.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation wishes to express its satisfaction that this agenda item is being considered at this session of the General Assembly. The fiftieth anniversary of the Organization affords a particularly suitable setting in which to reflect upon and bring out certain aspects of our working methods that at times seem to take on a lesser importance. My delegation supports the statement made by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the countries members of the Ibero-American Conference.

Member States have agreed on the use of certain languages in conducting United Nations activities to carry out the Organization's objectives. In keeping with decisions set forth in the General Assembly's rules of procedure and resolutions, such languages are to be employed on an equal footing. The official languages, therefore, are an optimal and indispensable communications tool. Their use is the best guarantee of dialogue, negotiation and understanding among the United Nations.

We note with concern that at the present time the Organization's ever-growing needs and activities have in practice been reflected in an inequitable use of United Nations official and working languages. We firmly believe that this situation must be corrected within the framework of the existing rules.

We believe that the draft resolution before us contains the minimum measures necessary to ensure the use, on an equal footing, of the official and working languages of the Organization. We believe that this will contribute to strengthening the multilingual character of the United Nations.

We support and endorse the initiative taken by the sponsors of this text, and we urge all Member States to do the same. There can be no doubt that today, after 50 years of unremitting labour, these measures will greatly benefit the Organization.

Mr. Fitschen (Germany): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Austria and Liechtenstein as well as of my own country. Unlike many preceding speakers, I do not have the privilege of expressing myself in my own language, but I am, of course, happy to use one of the working languages of the United Nations.

Germany, Austria and Liechtenstein have joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.6 because we share the concept of multilingualism in the United Nations and the concerns behind the draft resolution now before the General Assembly for adoption.

We know about the usefulness of a timely and precise translation of United Nations documents from our own national experience. Germany, Austria and Liechtenstein, together with Switzerland, have for some 20 years now financed the German Translation Service, which was established by the General Assembly in resolution 3355 (XXIX) of 18 December 1974. Through the translation of the resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as of other important United Nations documents, the German Translation Service has over the years developed a concise and reliable United Nations terminology in German, the availability of which has been of the utmost importance for the public debate about United Nations matters in our countries. Our people, as well as our political institutions, take great interest in United Nations affairs, and the early availability of important United Nations documents in the German language — such as, for example, the texts of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development or the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, to name but a few recent examples — greatly contributes to an informed public debate on the work of the United Nations.

It is against that background that we fully support the ideas expressed in draft resolution A/50/L.6. We regret, however, that it has not been possible to have the draft resolution acknowledge, in a preambular paragraph, the Assembly's decision to establish the German Translation Service, which in our view was a perfect expression of the idea of multilingualism in the United Nations. We have nevertheless joined the sponsors because we deem it particularly important that the provisions of the Charter and the rules of procedure concerning the use of languages in the United Nations be fully implemented. Let me add that we understand the concerns expressed earlier in the debate by Japan, Singapore and Malaysia. I am confident that they can be accommodated so that the draft resolution can be adopted by consensus.

The President: I should like to inform members that owing to the arrangements that have to be made in the General Assembly Hall in preparation for the Special Commemorative Meeting, I must adjourn the meeting at this point. Therefore, the remaining speakers on this agenda item will be heard next week, and the date will be announced in the *Journal*.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.